

50X1-HUM

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

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SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT: "A Front Offensive  
Operation Conducted Under the Conditions  
of the Initial Period of a Nuclear/Missile 50X1-HUM  
War", by Colonel-General G. Khetagurov

A Front Offensive Operation Conducted Under the Conditions  
of the Initial Period of a Nuclear/Missile War  
by Colonel-General G. Khetagurov

The power of the armament of modern armies and the probable radius and force of the destructive effect of new means of combat have now reached such a level that the roles of many of the concepts and requirements of the military art which were established previously are completely or partially disappearing. Indeed, the necessity of reviewing a series of obsolete beliefs and views and of taking an essentially new approach to the solution of questions of the operational and combat employment of troops is arising. In connection with the birth and rapid development of such a new type of armed forces as missile troops, new laws are being established in military affairs and the nature and substance of the interdependence existing between strategy, the operational art and tactics are being changed.

In contrast to previous wars, when the fate of the operation was decided principally on the field of battle and strategy basically crowned the efforts of tactics and the operational art, now the operational art and tactics very often will begin with the exploitation of the results of strategy or, stated better, with the exploitation of results of a strike by strategic weapons to complete the success of such a strike. Strategy will now operate not only with mass armies but also, directly with the use of large units of strategic missiles whose employment will have decisive influence on the progress and outcome of separate operations, as well as on the armed combat as a whole.

This does not mean, however, that the missile troops can independently decide all, or even a large portion, of the war's strategic missions. As indicated by the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. Malinovskiy, in contemporary conditions, just as previously, the successful conduct of combat activities is possible only on the basis of the coordinated use of all the types of armed forces and all means of combat. Mass employment of strategic and operational missiles

50X1-HUM

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with nuclear charges may sharply reduce the time of attainment of strategic goals of the war, will permit the infliction of crushing destruction on the enemy in a short time, and alter the forms and methods of the conduct of an operation. But it will not in any way reduce the role of man in warfare. Man has been and will remain the principal factor in the conduct of armed combat. 50X1-HUM

It is erroneous to think that a future war will actually become a kind of 'nuclear/missile duel'. To the same extent, it is incorrect to believe that the operations of the ground troops will lose their significance and that their missions will be limited to the overcoming of the unorganized resistance of the remnants of the enemy's troops and to the occupation of his territory.

The experience of many exercises testifies that even with the complete destruction of the majority of the industrial areas, the elimination of the most important transportation centers from use and the destruction of the most important air and missile bases, the enemy in many cases preserves the capability not only for resistance but also for the delivery of powerful strikes, frequently restores the combat effectiveness of groupings of his armed forces, and often attempts to seize the operational initiative. His complete and final destruction in the theater of military operations, under any scale of use of nuclear/missile weapons by both sides, is achieved as a rule only as a result of very intense combat, after the capture by ground and airborne troops of vitally important areas of territory, of centers of nuclear/missile weapons production, of the main airfield network, and also of the majority of the siting areas of the enemy's operational and operational-strategic missiles.

Fulfillment of the stated missions, as a rule, requires the execution of a series of successive front operations with the utilization of a very significant quantity of troops and weapons, including troops from border military districts.

In his article<sup>1</sup> Colonel-General Gastilovich, along with many absolutely correct conclusions, expressed the

1 Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", First Issue 1960.

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assumption that in view of the expected results of the use of strategic nuclear/missile weapons for the completion of enemy destruction in the European theaters of combat operations in modern conditions, 20 to 25 divisions in all are sufficient for the composition of the first strategic echelon, but taking into account the replacement of probable losses - 30 to 40 divisions. Furthermore, in his opinion, the above-mentioned forces can meet the main resistance only in the border zone of a depth of several tens of kilometers, after which the troops will have tasks connected chiefly with the overcoming of radioactive-contaminated zones and the occupation of the territory of hostile nations. Thus, active combat operations of the ground troops, in General Gastilovich's conception, are reduced in fact to one border engagement with a subsequent swift advance by large units without serious enemy resistance.

We believe that in spite of the enormous power of strategic nuclear/missile weapons, there still are insufficient foundations for such a conclusion. This permits the well-known underestimation of the enemy, and the countermeasures conducted by him, and does not consider the actual composition and disposition of NATO armed forces in the Western theater of combat operations (TVD) or the specific conditions of the execution of nuclear/missile strikes within the theater boundaries (even though connected with the prevailing direction of the winds).

In fact, if we are to believe that after the first nuclear/missile attack, our troops, located directly in the TVD in a depth up to 1,000 kilometers, will be able to preserve up to 2/3 of their forces, why then is the same possibility excluded with respect to the enemy? Why is the probability of the formation of new troop contingents and the transfer to the TVD of strong reserves, including reserves from the USA, Spain, and Algeria, completely discounted? Is it realistic to pose a question about the possibility of absolute disruption of these measures? Why is the probability of active operations on the part of a series of enemy groupings ignored; and why is it that, from the first days of the war, we contemplate only the complete withdrawal of his forces originally deployed in the border zone? Finally, what foundations are there to

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

assume that, after the first front operations, the enemy will practically refuse to fight and that the advancing troops will have only to occupy his territory?

The experience of exercises does not confirm this. On the contrary, it shows in the majority of cases that with the conclusion of the first front operations armed combat in the TVD not only does not cease but is capable of assuming an even sharper character. The communication lines of our troops are being stretched out. The reserves fall behind. At that very time, the enemy, profiting from the great vulnerability of the crossings of our water boundaries and also from his more developed transportation system, can bring up fresh forces from the depth more rapidly and can establish new groupings and activate the use of his nuclear/missile means in a shorter period of time. As a result, a very serious situation can be created in a number of directions. It is also characteristic that at this moment, as a rule, new operational axes are opened up before the advancing troops, so that new strategic missions arise which require the introduction of additional forces and equipment.

In General Gastilovich's opinion, the 30 to 40 divisions which began the operation must carry on the advance up to the ultimate limits of the theater. But what remains of them at the moment of completion of the immediate strategic mission? According to calculated data, verified by us in a number of exercises, on the 9th or 10th day of a war, the combat strength of up to 2/3 of the large units included in the composition of the first operational echelon of the front was generally already reduced by up to 30 to 35 percent of its original composition and furthermore, that up to 50 percent of the personnel remaining in action had to be hospitalized or evacuated to the rear because of their having received large doses of radiation.

Under such conditions it is clear that if an immediate buildup of strength from the depth is not carried out, the operation can abate and the success attained come to naught.

It is also indubitable that in the course of the

50X1-HUM

initial period of a war large engagements will inevitably take place not only in the border zone but also further on actually throughout the entire extent of the front operations, because no matter how powerful the first nuclear/missile strikes, not all targets and all groupings of the enemy can be destroyed by them. The complete radioactive contamination of absolutely all enemy occupied territory of the TVD cannot be ensured for a prolonged time. According to the nature of the actual meteorological conditions, this is unlikely, and indeed, obviously inexpedient. Therefore, during the initial period of a war, the troops must not orient themselves for a march, but for intensive combat operations in the various areas, and moreover, not only in gaps, but also directly in the zones of high radioactive contamination.

In light of such conditions, we think that the composition of forces as defined by General Gastilovich for the fulfilment of the most immediate strategic missions will clearly be inadequate. One must proceed from the necessity of deploying a front not in the TVD, but on each of the strategic axes, incorporating not less than 3 to 5 combined-arms and tank armies in its composition, depending upon the operational scope, and also a number of separate divisions. Moreover, it is necessary to assume that in some cases the resolution of the most immediate strategic tasks might require, even during the course of the initial period of a war, an additional deployment of new armies and even fronts in the theater of military operations, not for the occupation of enemy territory, but for the conduct of active combat operations.

The specific means and forms of conduct of front offensive operations undertaken on various strategic axes during the initial period of a nuclear/missile war, will depend upon the characteristics of these axes, and the general strategic situation, but mainly upon the number and nature of the strategic nuclear/missile strikes carried out by the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (Stavka V GK) in the theater of military operations. It may be assumed that prior to and during the course of the first front operation, several massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes will be carried out in the axis of the offensive of each front and will be tied into one another by the general strategic plan.

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but distinguished from one another by assigned mission<sup>50X1-HUM</sup> and by the areas of territory within whose limits the main body of nuclear/missile ammunition will be employed. The first of these strikes, usually a counterstrike, will be the most powerful. It will be conducted simultaneously in the entire strategic depth with the aim of eliminating individual states with limited territory from the war and also with the aim of inflicting within a short time by the main groupings of the armed forces, such losses as would permit the rapid seizure of the strategic initiative in the very beginning of the war.

In subsequent massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes, the main efforts of the missile troops can concentrate either on the fulfilment of analogous missions but with destruction of other less important or surviving targets or switch to the destruction, primarily of economic centers and areas, ports and transportation centers, with a view to the rapid annihilation of the enemy's military - economic potential and the disruption of his mobilization measures and strategic transport.

Of course such a sequence in the implementation of strikes is not the only one possible. It should be examined only as one of a large number of the most probable forms of the use of strategic nuclear/missile weapons. Quite varied forms of massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes can be employed in a specific situation in a TVD. It is not ruled out, for example, that in every one of them all of the tasks mentioned above will be resolved simultaneously rather than consecutively, in which case the sequence of the neutralization of targets for every group of tasks will be determined in accordance with the degree of their importance and the general concept of the strategic operation.

The main and decisive role in the execution of massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes will undoubtedly, belong to the strategic missile large units directly subordinate to the Stavka V GK. However, in a number of cases, both for the initial and successive strikes, it is also possible to include the missile weapons of the fronts for the fulfilment of separate tasks in a zone

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50X1-HUM

up to 300 to 500 kilometers from the border. In organizing their utilization, the Stavka VGK, apparently, will indicate to the front troop commander:

- the areas for carrying out nuclear/missile strikes to be accomplished by strategic weapons in the front zone of operations and capable of rendering direct influence on the development of the initial front offensive operation;
- the time and composition of front missile weapons included in the participation in the counterstrike and of subsequent massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes;
- the borders of the sectors established for the use of missile weapons of fronts;
- the tasks of front missile weapons to be fulfilled in the interests of the entire strategic operation, with instructions regarding the targets to be destroyed, their coordinates, and the time of destruction;
- the direction, zone, or the area within the borders of neighboring fronts in which maneuvers by nuclear/missile strikes must be prepared.

On the basis of this, the front troop commander must make a specific decision with regard to the destruction of all targets assigned to him or selected independently, including: establish the number of nuclear/missile strikes conducted by front and army weapons; the expenditure of nuclear ammunition utilized; plan the sequence and order of destruction of various targets, the yield and types of nuclear bursts, the coordinates of their epicenters, the means of delivery of nuclear weapons to the target, the time of their readiness, etc.

The execution of powerful strategic nuclear/missile strikes in the TVD will raise sharply the capabilities of the fronts, will lead to a further increase of the scope of front operations, and at the same time will seriously affect their makeup.

When planning an operation, the front troop commander

50X1-HUM

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must carefully calculate the influence which the strategic nuclear/missile strikes may have on the operations of 50X1-HUM troops under his command, must estimate the probable level of destruction of various enemy groupings and targets, envisage when and which areas will become zones of high level radioactive contamination as a result of surface nuclear bursts and how these will reflect on fulfilment of the tasks assigned to the front.

Only after this can correct conclusions be drawn regarding the expedient organization of the operation, the most advantageous grouping of forces and weapons, the direction of the main strike, the order of use of our missile and nuclear weapons, and also, regarding all other questions of operational planning.

As a whole, the concept of a front offensive operation undertaken in the initial period of a nuclear/missile war must, in our opinion, reflect the following basic points in all cases:

1. The order of participation of front nuclear/missile weapons in the counterstrike and of subsequent massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes organized by the Stavka VGR in the theater of military operations.
2. The method of exploitation by ground and airborne troops of the results of nuclear strikes carried out by large units of strategic missiles and missiles of medium range.
3. The method of destruction of the deploying or deployed strike groupings of enemy troops by combined operations of operational and organic (voyskovaya) missiles, ground troops, aviation, and airborne troops.
4. The nature of the active cover of secondary axes by a minimum of forces in conjunction with a wide maneuver of nuclear/missile weapons depending on the possible operations of the enemy.

Of the aforementioned, it is especially worthwhile to examine the measures ensuring the opportune exploitation by a front of the results of strategic nuclear/missile

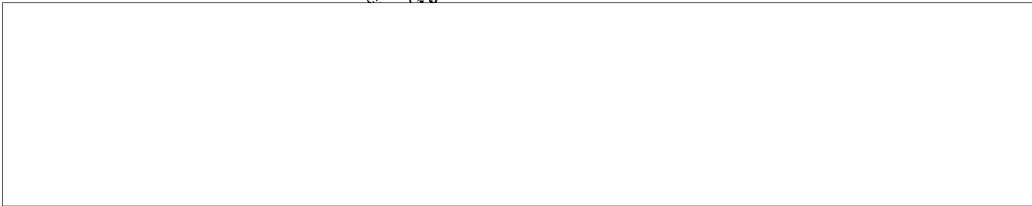
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strikes. We imagine that the aforementioned requirement will be achieved first of all by means of a swift breakthrough by front tank groupings into points or areas neutralized by strategic nuclear/missile strikes, with the aim of seizing these areas before the enemy liquidates the results of the assault; by the development of vigorous offensive operations at the moment when a large portion of the enemy operational-tactical weapons for nuclear attack will be neutralized or put out of action; by the utilization of zones of contamination created for the disruption of an enemy maneuver, blockading his groupings from the flanks, and for the economy of friendly forces on axes where because of an unfavorable radiation situation the operations of ground troops will prove to be impossible.

As regards other elements of the concept connected with the organization of destruction of the groupings of missile units, ground troops, and aviation deployed by the enemy on various axes in the front zone, it is our opinion that in all situations they must contain the idea, firstly of surprise nuclear/missile neutralization of the most important groupings by front, army, and organic missiles at the most favorable moment, and secondly, the immediate exploitation of results achieved by combined-arms and tank armies by inflicting swift strikes from the march on those axes where the enemy does not expect it and where, as a result of the massive use of nuclear missiles, he is weakened to the greatest degree. In short, the front troop commander must determine when, where, and in what way the decisive destruction of the enemy will be carried out by various groupings with the assistance of front and army nuclear missiles and then --- what form of operational maneuver by the ground troops can be employed in order to finally destroy and finish off his troops, annihilate or capture an airfield, launching installations, and missile bases, thus ensuring the complete fulfilment of the assigned tasks of the operation.

It can be assumed that four groups of strikes, each different in character, will be delivered in the direction of the operations of the front troops:

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- strategic nuclear/missile strikes carried out in accordance with the policy of the Stavka V GK for the destruction of the enemy in the theater as a whole;
  - nuclear strikes executed by strategic weapons at the request and in the interests of the front;
  - nuclear strikes by front weapons carried out according to the Stavka plan for the fulfillment of individual missions of strategic significance;
  - nuclear strikes by front weapons, carried out in accordance with the decision of the front commander in the interests of fulfilling his own missions.

All of these strikes must be carefully coordinated and considered in the plan of a front offensive operation with a view to the fact that they should complement one another during the suppression and destruction of various enemy groupings, his firing means, and rear installations.

A detailed elaboration of the questions of the use of front nuclear/missile weapons will now form the basis for the planning of a front operation. We must proceed from the fact that with the modern scale of use of nuclear/missile weapons, they can no longer be considered only as a means of supporting the combat operations of the troops. Within the framework of the front, this weapon now becomes the primary and decisive means of combat which determines the possibility of the fulfillment of the majority of the tasks of an offensive operation. Therefore, the concept of the delivery of front (army) nuclear/missile strikes appears to be the most important pivotal element of decision and plan of the operation. The operations of division ground troops must be planned in conformity with the selected method of the use of the nuclear/missile weapon and not the reverse.

It is quite clear that under such conditions the purposeful planning and conduct of operations will appear impossible without an early preparation of the sequence of the use of nuclear/missile weapons in the entire depth of an operation with regard to the probable

50X1-HUM

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perspectives of its development.

As the experience of exercises demonstrates, it is advisable not only to plan the tentative distribution of nuclear/missile weapons according to axes and the tasks to be fulfilled, but also to determine, to the extent possible, the main massive nuclear/missile strikes which will be organized and conducted by the front with centralized use of both front and army weapons. It is necessary to establish the tentative number of such strikes, and when, for what purposes, and approximately what expenditure of nuclear ammunition will be used.

It is apparent that in the course of the operation there will not be so many such strikes (generally not more than 5 to 7), for, as experience has shown, a front cannot conduct more than one or two massive strikes within a 24-hour period. It is clear that of all these strikes only the first massive strike (primarily counter) will be carefully planned and organized in advance in all details, including the selection of specific targets (main and alternate), determination of sequence, the timing, and the nature of their neutralization. As regards the remaining massive strikes, they can and must be worked out only in a general way with determination only of the main tasks to be fulfilled, tentative periods for their implementation, and the approximate expenditure of nuclear ammunition. This will permit us to avoid the unexpected and will provide the front troop commander with the opportunity of having a sufficient amount of weapons in readiness at the necessary moment for a decisive influence on the situation.

The operations of front ground troops, closely combined with the massive use of nuclear/missile weapons in operations of the initial period of a war, will most likely take the form of swift and deep strikes delivered by separate tank groupings on independent axes with a mass landing of tactical and operational airborne forces in the depth and a broad movement of individual units by helicopters for rapid surmounting of zones with high radioactive contamination and also for the reinforcement of those troop groupings which have burst out ahead. As a rule, such a swift offensive will be closely combined with the simultaneous conduct of sustained defensive

50X1-HUM

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Battles and engagements on other axes with energetically advancing enemy large units which have made a deep penetration. As a result, a very complex interlacing of combat formations of ground troops is created in a majority of cases. The engagement will develop on a very large front, but in depth it can simultaneously envelop a territory of several hundreds of kilometers. The combat will take on an extraordinarily sharp character for seizure and retention of the operational initiative. Success will accrue to the side which, in a shorter period of time, achieves sizable operational results, uses its nuclear/missile strikes more effectively, more quickly captures the principal areas where aviation is based, and especially the launching sites of enemy operational - tactical missiles. The front troops must not permit a deep penetration by enemy groupings and at the same time they must break through, in the gaps between the zones of contamination formed, and sometimes directly across these zones, in short time limits and at a high tempo, to the largest political and military-industrial centers of the enemy, to areas where his reserves are being formed, to ports, and also to the other most important objectives of the operational and strategic rear. At the same time it is necessary to ensure the decisive destruction of both these retreating enemy groupings and the new enemy groupings being deployed in the rear. Front tank troops must break up these groupings, force them into impassable areas or zones of contamination and liquidate them piecemeal.

As a rule, a surprise counterblow of several groupings from various directions in combination with massive nuclear strikes by army and front missiles must be organized for that. To aim for the encirclement of large enemy forces in such a situation will obviously be inexpedient. Indeed, to carry out such a maneuver will be extraordinarily difficult because of the impossibility of a reliable blockade of the encircled troops, as was correctly stated in the pages of the Special Collection of the Journal, "Military Thought" by General Gastilovich and General Tolkonyuk. Therefore, instead of encirclement with formation of a "ring", the advancing troops must strive to capture only the most

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important centers of transportation on the flanks and in the rear of the enemy, to restrict his maneuver by specially formed zones of contamination, to disperse the isolated grouping into units and then, meteorological conditions permitting, suppress them with powerful surface nuclear strikes.

The question of the operational makeup of front troops in an offensive operation of the initial period of a war stands in a category of its own. In view of the increase in the scope of possible enemy use of weapons of mass destruction, the necessity arises for further dispersion of forces and equipment. However, this does not mean that one can extend troop combat formations ad infinitum and undertake an offensive on an operational axis with only separate divisions or even just units. In all situations, the front and army must resolve their tasks not as individual large units but as operational groupings, each of which can have up to three or four divisions. Only in such a situation can one ensure continuous and rapid accumulation of forces from the depth, timely replacement of troops who have lost combat effectiveness, and a sufficient force for striking the enemy.

In this respect, General Gastilovich adheres to a different view in his article. He believes it advisable to repudiate completely the term "strike group" and proposes to introduce the term "offensive of separate divisions on independent axes". Thus, the idea of isolated strikes by small forces is being advanced.

On the basis of the experience of exercises conducted in the Group of Troops (Gruppa voysk) and also in other military districts, we believe that such a method of operation even with very large-scale use of missiles with nuclear charges of high yield will hardly be correct. Of course, if we count on an unhindered advance of troops through devastated territory, then an offensive by separate divisions can provide some results. But, if we proceed from the fact that the enemy will be able to preserve a certain portion of his forces and will attempt to undertake vigorous offensive operations, then the proposed method in conducting the offensive can hardly lead to significant success.

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We agree with the fact that our division, in the event it is equipped with tactical nuclear weapons, will be a powerful force. But can one division destroy one or two enemy divisions in a short time under conditions of direct contact when the use of high-yield nuclear ammunition is excluded? Can we ensure sufficient viability of such a "small grouping" and a continuous increase of its efforts from the depth? In the final analysis can we, with one large unit, simultaneously resolve several varied tasks, which, as a rule, will arise on any operational axis?

Obviously, not isolated divisions but operational groupings are needed for this. Depending upon the situation, the operational grouping may be formed and may operate in different ways. In the absence of direct contact with the enemy the gaps between the individual large units included in its composition may reach 10 to 15 kilometers or more. But in the course of battle the troops of an operational grouping must operate as an entity, maintaining close tactical and nuclear-fire liaison with one another. The fear that they can be destroyed by one strike of a nuclear missile with a megaton charge are groundless because the use of such a weapon is impossible under conditions of a dynamic engagement with direct contact by both sides in the tactical depth. As regards nuclear strikes of small and medium yield, they can inflict the same loss on the troops whether the divisions are operating within the composition of the grouping or if they are separated one from the other.

The matter is somewhat different as regards the disposition of operational and special reserves. We believe that they cannot be concentrated on the most important axes, as was done previously. Obviously, a great portion of the reserves and second echelons, will have to be dispersed along the entire front zone, avoiding areas within whose limits there might be objectives which are convenient targets for a nuclear/missile assault by the enemy (for example, large industrial centers, centers of transportation, ports, etc.).

The echelonment in depth of reserves must be sharply

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increased: in an army, up to 200 kilometers at least and in a front, up to 500 kilometers. It is true that at first glance such norms under the high performance conditions of modern engagements may appear to be excessively high. But one must keep in mind that these are the ultimate zone borders for the disposition of reserve large units, and that the immediate reaction to sharp changes of the situation can now and, obviously will, be carried out first of all by massive use of nuclear/missile means. At the same time a large echelonment in depth of the reserves will permit them to escape destruction by high-yield nuclear strikes, since it will afford an opportunity to enlarge the gaps between large units up to 30-50 kilometers and deploy each division over an area up to 300 square kilometers if part of the army reserve and up to 500 square kilometers if part of the front reserve.

Now, concerning the second front echelon. Is it necessary? General Gastilovich believes that it is not. In modern situations, according to him, only separate divisions can be introduced into an engagement from the depth. If it is necessary to overcome strong enemy resistance or to switch efforts quickly to a new axis, this must be accomplished principally by "concentration of nuclear weapons and their delivery means" and not by introducing strike groupings into the engagement.

We believe that such a juxtaposition of various front forces and weapons in an operation of the initial period of a war is not quite correct. In fact, a rapid change in the situation, as a rule, can be achieved only under conditions of a coordinated delivery of both nuclear/missile strikes and ground troop strikes. Every attempt to resolve a task by nuclear means or by ground troops alone is doomed to failure.

There are not sufficient bases to assume that separate divisions brought into an engagement in isolated axes after a massive nuclear assault can seriously influence the situation, particularly during the critical moments of the development of the operation. During battle with a strong enemy grouping, this will impede the exploitation of success and can bring about



the piecemeal destruction of such divisions. The speedy resolution of a newly arisen important operational task can only be achieved, today as formerly, by the use on an operational axis of an operational grouping of troops composed of not one, but two or three and even four fresh divisions, united under a single army command. Consequently, a second echelon is necessary. However, its commitment into an engagement will apparently, have to be carried out somewhat differently now, on a wider front and, in a number of cases, not on one but on two adjacent axes.

How will the initial front operation of the initial period of a war under conditions of the Western TVD proceed as a whole? Naturally, this will depend on many factors, including the nature of the initiation of the war and the results of the first nuclear/missile strikes of both sides.

Enemy use of a large quantity of nuclear missiles and strategic aviation in the first strike can undoubtedly, inflict enormous material and moral damage on the opposite side: seriously weaken its military-economic potential, disrupt the established troop groupings (if they are not sufficiently dispersed), disrupt the mobilization build-up of the armed forces, etc. However, this still does not mean that the fate of the war, its initial period, or even the first strategic operation will be decided by such a strike.

Experience of exercises shows that with thorough preparation of the country for war and with sufficient dispersion of missile launching sites over a large territory, a surprise attack does not at all deprive the troops of the possibility of inflicting a nuclear/missile counterstrike of great force.

It should be taken into account that modern means already permit the detection of the flight of missiles when they are several thousand kilometers from target. Therefore, each side will have time to give the appropriate commands to missile units and to organize as a counterstrike the first launching of ready solid fuel missiles before the enemy is able to put them out of action.

One can also anticipate that the ground troops,



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subjected to an attack, will often retain the capability for active operations, thanks to the high results of the counterstrike and will be in condition to conduct a successful fight for the seizure and retention of the operational initiative. In any case, on the main strategic axes of the Western TVD it is necessary to aim primarily for immediate development of an offensive /3 or 4 words missing/ of the rapid exploitation of the results of a nuclear/missile counterstrike.

However, one cannot exclude a situation in which the results of an enemy nuclear assault will be so serious that there will be practically no forces for a quick shift to the offensive. In such circumstances the efforts of commands and staffs must be directed at bringing their forces back into order as quickly as possible (in any case before the enemy), preserving the initiative in the use of operational-tactical missiles and, at the most favorable moment when the enemy is weakened to the extent possible, at beginning vigorous offensive operations in decisive directions with the newly created groupings. The determination of such a moment requires great skill. This requires precise calculation, the ability to evaluate correctly our own capabilities and the capabilities of the enemy, and the most expedient planning of the targets for repeated nuclear strikes, of the deploying time of friendly strike groupings, and of the sequence of their entry into combat.

Depending on the level of operational readiness of the antagonists, the effectiveness of the first nuclear/missile strikes, and the decisions reached, the shift to the offensive by front ground troops can be carried out under conditions of a deep invasion of enemy strike groupings at the moment of their deployment on the border or, finally, in the course of the creation of such groupings in the depth. In all of these cases, the front troop offensive apparently will take the form of a series of large meeting engagements waged simultaneously in several directions.

50X1-HUM

Success on at least one of these axes must be achieved quickly and developed with utmost resolution in depth. Front strike groupings (especially the tank

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50X1-HUM

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units included in their composition) must advance swiftly to the objectives destroyed by strategic nuclear strikes, split up the enemy reserves which are being moved up, and in cooperation with airborne forces must destroy them piecemeal. For this, the average rate of troop advance must reach 70 to 90 kilometers and for tank divisions - 100 to 120 kilometers per 24 hours; when conducting strategic nuclear/missile strikes on the TVD this can be considered entirely practicable.

The correct planning of the battle for fire superiority over the enemy and skilful organization of the fire support of troop operations will have vast significance for the attainment of a high offensive impetus.

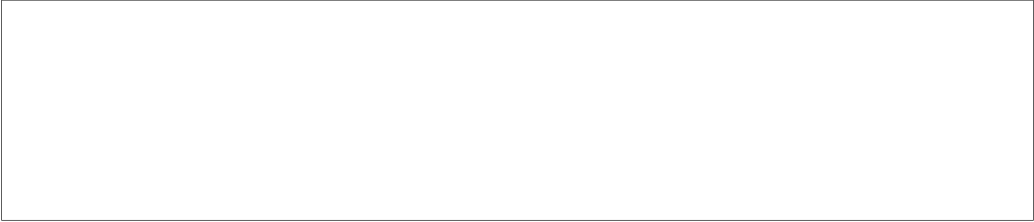
During World War II the basic tasks of fire support were resolved principally in the process of conducting artillery -- air preparation and artillery -- air support of an offensive. Now, fire support greatly exceeds these limits in its aims and nature. Its basis will not be fire by conventional means of combat but primarily powerful nuclear/missile strikes, delivered on the entire depth of the enemy's formation.

In view of this, artillery and air preparation and support of the offensive as previously understood lose their significance. Actually, they are being converted into only one of the composite elements of fire support and not the principal one at that. In the majority of cases their task will be primarily the preparation and support of assaults by individual units and subunits. Therefore, they will find their basic use at divisional and regimental level.

In the army, and more so in the front, scope, fire support of an offensive operation as an operational concept will include: participation of front missile weapons in massive strategic nuclear/missile strikes organized by the Stavka RVK in the TVD, nuclear-fire preparation and nuclear-fire support of advancing troops.

The tasks of nuclear-fire preparation and support will be carried out by front, army, and organic missiles and also by light fighter-bomber aircraft, tube and light rocket artillery in close coordination and calculated to

50X1-HUM




ensure the possibility of conducting a continuous troop advance with average tempos of 70-90-100 kilometers in a 24-hour period. In this event, the targets of fire strikes are not only enemy troops and fire means in the tactical and near operational depth, but also his missile units, aviation, tactical and operational reserves, control points, and also installations of the operational rear.

Because of the frequent and sharp changes of situation characteristic of the initial period of a nuclear war, the inevitable dropping out of action of individual elements of the operational organization and because of the possible establishment of extensive zones of contamination with lethal levels of radiation in the directions of the troop offensive, wider maneuver of forces and weapons than formerly will have to be conducted in the course of a modern front offensive operation.

The front troop commander must be constantly ready to transfer his efforts from one direction to another, in order to reinforce one troop grouping or another. This will be achieved primarily by means of a rapid reorientation of missile weapons and the maneuvers of their strikes with nuclear warheads. But reorientation solely of missiles does not provide the proper result in many cases, particularly since in mobile forms of combat there often will not be suitable targets either in the tactical or operational depth for the delivery of a large quantity of nuclear/missile strikes.

Therefore, as a rule the maneuver of nuclear strikes must be inseparably combined with the maneuver of ground troops, their forces, and weapons.

Of course, a rapid transfer of troops over considerable distances is sometimes linked with extraordinarily great difficulties. An especially severe situation can be created in this respect during the initial period of a war when many lines of communication are put out of action. Great skill is necessary under conditions of mass destruction to lead large units and units over territory with extensive zones of contamination during continuous activity of enemy aircraft overhead. Re50X1-HUM grouping of troops in such a situation will require exceptionally precise control of the columns, flexible



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maneuver of them, repeated changes of routes of movement, and the conduct of extensive obstacle-clearing measures. Everything will have to be taken into account: the condition of the terrain, the radiation situation, the destruction created fires, the probable direction of the spread of radioactive dust clouds, etc.

In many cases all fixed bridges over both large and medium rivers in the directions of the movement will be knocked out of service. As a result, the laying of new river crossings will be required and quite often, the organization of crossing of river lines by tanks along the bottom. Naturally, all this cannot but affect the march tempos. In any case, estimates on the possibility of accomplishment by divisions  $\sqrt{2}$  or 3 words missing<sup>7</sup> in the course of the operation, daily marches of 300 to 350 kilometers can become practicable only with very well calculated engineering support, reliable screening of the columns from the air and also, with careful organization by the commandant's service, and the equipping of all large units with their own ferrying equipment.

The complex conditions of maneuver and the conduct of combat activities in front operations of the initial period of a nuclear/missile war require further improvement of the organizational structure of our ground troops.

Experience of exercises shows, for example, that tank armies of the existing composition will experience serious difficulties in their operations in almost all strategic directions under the conditions of the Western TVD. The inadequacies of motorized infantry sharply complicate their forcing rivers, the capture of densely populated and wooded areas, the overcoming of zones of great destruction, etc. Therefore, it is advisable to have tank armies composed of three tank and one motorized-rifle division. Eliminate heavy tank divisions as a permanent element from the tank army (TA) composition. Keep them in the capacity of large units of the High Command Reserve for the reinforcement of troops in separate directions.

Concurrently, the question of the future reorganization of tank divisions also arises. Postwar experience

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persistently bespeaks the advisability of conversion of tank divisions of T-55 type tanks. It is necessary to eliminate the heavy tank regiment of the tank division from the division.

In its stead, we should have, in the army composition, a heavy tank brigade as a reserve of the army commander for reinforcement of tank divisions in an offensive or defensive operational situation. The division artillery should be converted to self-propelled rocket artillery of the type of the separate battalions of the Rocket Artillery (RA). The entire park of armored carriers should be replaced with amphibious armored carriers. The division TOE should include a regiment of Mi-4 helicopters, instead of a helicopter flight (zveno), not for liaison, but for the support of combat operations of the division in the operational depth.

The necessity has arisen to introduce serious changes in the structure of the operational and troop rear service areas as well. Practically all the command-staff exercises of the past years have convinced us that despite the reorganization already carried out, the rear cannot yet properly support combat activities of the troops in operations of the initial period of a war. Because of the high tempos of the offensive of the troops and the mass destruction of communication lines, the existing system of supply and evacuation, based mainly on the use of rail and automotive transport, and the intended successive transshipment of cargo to front and army depots, is not justified.

Usually materiel for the troops begins to arrive already by the 3rd to 5th day of a war with great irregularity. As a rule, rail transport is put out of action. The work of automotive transport becomes difficult because of its limited quantity. The excessive bulk of rear organs also continues to affect adversely the activities of the rear. The army mobile base, for example, is now calculated for a volume of up to 5,200 tons of various cargo. Meanwhile, army transport is not in a position to pick up this quantity of supplies in one trip. Therefore the base, as a rule, falls behind and is not able to cope with its tasks.

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The complicated tasks in the organization of materiel-technical support of front operations of the initial period of a war require the vigorous elimination of these deficiencies. We believe that the basic means of supply and evacuation at the front and army levels must be air transport, automotive transport and only partly railroad transport. In connection with this, it is advisable to include heavy-duty helicopters and aircraft in the TOE of division troops at the rate of a division of Mi-4 and Mi-6 helicopters to an army and 3 or 4 air transport divisions to a front.

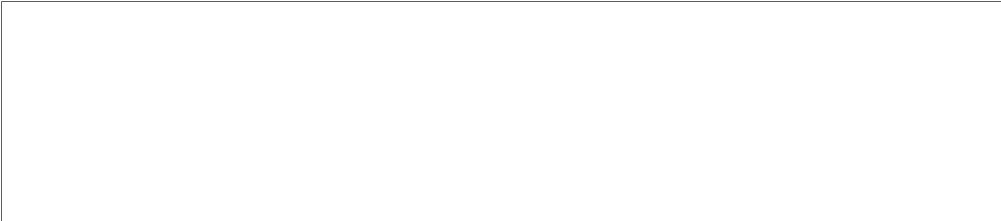
It is necessary to equip fuel dumps with field pipelines. For supplying fuel to the troops and servicing tank columns in the course of combat there should be "tanker" helicopters of large capacity with which a net of GSM (fuel and lubricant) distribution points could be organized in the operational depth and in the theater of military operations. By so doing, the dependence of materiel-technical supply on communication lines is eliminated and the necessity of excessive closeness of supplies to the troops is eliminated.

At the same time, it is necessary to review completely the system of supply and evacuation with an eye to abolishing the intermediate links. Previously, these were necessary because the supply arm was restricted by the possibilities of automotive transport turnaround. With the shift to a combined system of supply and evacuation, this principle does not justify itself. Therefore, in our opinion, there is good sense in organizing the supply of large units and units with all sorts of combat provisions and supplies directly from front depots located at various distances from the front line. In this way the reduction of supply time will be ensured and conditions will be created for flexible maneuvering of supplies on a front based on specific conditions in the conduct of combat operations by the various troop groupings.

Armies should maintain only a reserve of materiel (not more than 2,000-2,300 tons) which the troop commander could use to affect the support of the troops operating in the directions of the main strike.

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It is quite clear that the questions enumerated do not by any means exhaust the entire substance of the problems arising before us in connection with the study of the peculiarities of the preparation and conduct of an operation in the initial period of nuclear/missile war. But their statement and correct solution, in our opinion, can promote further development of military-theoretical thought, and the investigation and elaboration of new, more perfected forms and methods of troop combat operations.

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